

Texas Democrats leaving state to stop GOP voting bill

By PAUL J. WEBER

Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Democrats in the Texas Legislature on Monday began bolting for Washington, D.C., and said they were ready to remain there for weeks in a second revolt against a GOP overhaul of election laws, forcing a dramatic new showdown over voting rights in America. One large group was set to leave Austin on private planes before the GOP could pass a voting bill in a special legislative session ordered by Republican Gov. Greg Abbott that began days ago. It was not immediately clear how many of the 67 Democrats in the Texas House of Representatives planned to go, but it was expected to be enough to bring the Legislature to a halt.

"This is a now-or-never for our democracy. We are holding the line in Texas," said Democratic state Rep. Trey Martinez Fischer. "We've left our jobs, we've left our families, we've left our homes. Because there is nothing more important than voting rights in America."

By leaving, Democrats would again deny the GOP majority a quorum to pass bills, barely a month after their walkout thwarted the first push for sweeping new voting restrictions in Texas, including outlawing 24-hour polling places, banning ballot drop boxes and empowering partisan poll watchers.



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This June 1, 2021, file photo shows the State Capitol in Austin, Texas.

Associated Press



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1 Main dish


1 Dessert

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Texas Democrats leaving state to stop GOP voting bill

Continued from Front

The decision to hole up in Washington is aimed at ratcheting up pressure in the nation's capital on President Joe Biden and Congress to act on voting at the federal level. Biden is due to deliver a major address on the issue Tuesday in Philadelphia, after facing growing criticism for taking what some of the left call too passive a role in the fight.

It would mark the first time since 2003 that Texas Democrats, shut out of power in the state Capitol for decades, have crossed state lines to break quorum.

The drastic move lays bare how Democrats are making America's biggest red state their last stand against the GOP's rush to enact new voting restrictions in response to former President Donald Trump's false claims that the 2020 election was stolen. More than a dozen states this year have already passed tougher election laws — but only in Texas have Democrats put up this kind of fight.

Neither Abbott nor Republican House Speaker Dade Phelan offered public reaction in the hours since word of the trip leaked out Monday, and their offices did not immediately return messages seeking comment.

Over the weekend, Texas Republicans began advancing measures that also bring back provisions to ban drive-thru voting, add



In this May 31, 2021, file photo, Texas state Rep. Jessica Gonzalez speaks during a news conference in Austin, Texas, after House Democrats pulled off a dramatic, last-ditch walkout and blocked one of the most restrictive voting bills in the U.S. from passing before a midnight deadline.

Associated Press

new voter ID requirements to absentee ballots and prohibit local elections officials from proactively sending mail-in ballot applications to voters. Abbott also gave lawmakers a lengthy to-do list this summer heavy on hot-button conservative issues, including restrictions over how race is taught in schools and banning transgender athletes from playing in girls' sports.

The agenda is widely opposed by Democrats. A first key vote on the new voting measures had been expected this week, hastening their scramble to leave town.

The move carries risks and no guarantee of victory in the long run.

Abbott, who is up for reelection in 2022 and has demanded new election laws in Texas, could keep calling 30-day special sessions until a bill is passed. He also punished Democrats after their May walkout by vetoing paychecks for roughly 2,000 Capitol employees, which will begin taking effect in September unless the Legislature is in session to restore the funding.

Staying away for an extended time could also carry repercussions in next year's midterm elections, although many Texas Democrats are already expecting a difficult cycle in 2022, particularly with Republicans set to begin drawing new voting maps this fall

that could cement their majorities.

But for weeks, Democrats have signaled they were ready to draw a line. Adding to their anger: A Houston man who gained attention last year after waiting more than six hours to cast a ballot was arrested on illegal voting charges, and put in jail one day before the special session began Thursday. Attorneys for Hervis Rogers say the 62-year-old did not know that his being on parole for a felony burglary conviction meant he wasn't allowed to vote.

How Republicans respond next will be a major test of their resolve.

Phelan told Austin television station KXAN last week

that "all options are on the table" if Democrats revolt a second time but did not elaborate. When Democrats last fled the state two decades ago — in a failed attempt to stop new GOP-drawn voting maps — state troopers were deployed to bring them back.

State Sen. Bryan Hughes, the author of both GOP attempts to pass election changes in Texas, said over the weekend that the legislation had become "bitterly partisan." He defended the new version, which leaves out contentious attempts to ban Sunday morning early voting and make it easier for judges to overturn an election.

"Your ballot is sacrosanct," Hughes said while introducing a bill Saturday. "Everything else in the election process should be bathed in sunshine."

Last week, Vice President Kamala Harris announced \$25 million in new spending by the Democratic National Committee on actions to protect voting access ahead of the 2022 midterm elections.

Biden and his team are stressing ongoing legal efforts to safeguard voting rights. They've also promised a major legislative push after Senate Republicans blocked a sweeping election overhaul last month. The president has told reporters he plans on "speaking extensively" on voting rights and that he would be "going on the road on this issue." □



In this Monday, May 24, 2021 file photo, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director General of the World Health Organization (WHO), speaks during a bilateral meeting with Swiss Interior and Health Minister Alain Berset before signing a BioHub Initiative with a global COVID-19 Pathogen repository in Spiez laboratory on the sideline of the opening of the 74th World Health Assembly, WHA, at the WHO headquarters, in Geneva, Switzerland.

Associated Press

UN calls for global database of human gene editing research

LONDON (AP) — The World Health Organization issued new recommendations Monday on human genome editing, calling for a global registry to track "any form of genetic manipulation" and proposing a whistle-blowing mechanism to raise concerns about unethical or unsafe research. The U.N. health agency commissioned an expert group in late 2018 following a dramatic announcement

from Chinese scientist He Jankui that he had created the world's first gene-edited babies. "In the field of stem cell research, unscrupulous entrepreneurs and clinics have deliberately misused clinical trial registries by registering procedures they plan to undertake as if they were properly sanctioned clinical trials," the group said, calling for WHO to ensure that all genetic editing research registered in their

database are reviewed and approved by an ethics committee.

When Chinese scientist He announced he had altered the DNA of twin babies to prevent them from catching HIV, he said the university where he worked was not aware and that he had funded the work himself. He was later sentenced to three years in jail for conducting "illegal medical practices." □

Records: Iowa troopers going to border at 'no cost to Texas'

By RYAN J. FOLEY and DAVID PITT

Associated Press

IOWA CITY, Iowa (AP) —

Agreements released Monday show Iowa is donating the use of state troopers and their equipment at "no cost to Texas" to fight crime along the U.S. border with Mexico, but a spokesman for Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds said there still is a chance Texas could later reimburse some costs.

The agreements show Iowa troopers, members of an Iowa State Patrol tactical team that responds to high-risk situations, command staff and an investigator will be part of the deployment. The total number is redacted from the documents, but Iowa officials have said previously they expect to send 25 to 30 officers from the Iowa Department of Public Safety for a two-week mission this month.

Texas and Arizona asked other states to "absorb the associated costs with this mission" for the good of the country, according to the resource support agreements. "Iowa is donating this resource," according to the agreements, signed by the director of Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management



In a June 10, 2021 file photo, Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds speaks with community leaders during a visit in Oskaloosa, Iowa.

on July 2 and released by the department Monday under the open records law. Pat Garrett, a spokesman for Reynolds, said the agreements don't necessarily mean that Texas won't eventually pay Iowa for part of the costs, saying "nothing is final until we really end the mission." "Obviously, Texas and Arizona had an immediate need so we wanted to make sure we were answering it," he said. "Again,

we won't have final payment details until all of this is over."

Garrett said the state has ruled out the use of private donations.

Iowa Department of Public Safety spokeswoman Debbie McClung said Monday that discussions about "payment structures are ongoing."

The total cost of the mission is unknown.

Reynolds, a Republican, announced the deployment

last month, responding to requests for assistance from the GOP governors of Texas and Arizona through the interstate Emergency Management Assistance Compact. She said that Iowa "has no choice but to act" to help secure the border, citing drugs, human trafficking and violent crime that affect all 50 states.

It's believed to be the first time Iowa state police officers have been sent on an out-of-state mission since

Associated Press

Iowa joined the compact in the 1990s. Several other Republican governors have pledged to send law enforcement in response to the requests, including those in Florida, Nebraska, Idaho and Ohio.

The interstate compact says states responding to disasters are to be reimbursed for their services and equipment by states receiving aid, but that states can establish separate agreements regarding costs.

Iowa's agreements do not mention any potential cost recovery from Texas. The Texas emergency management official who signed them July 2 wrote in on each agreement, "no cost to Texas," reiterating similar language in their text.

South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem has said she would use a \$1 million donation from a Republican donor to send National Guard troops. In a speech to a conservative audience Sunday, she criticized governors who sent officers to the border, saying it was irresponsible "to short-change law enforcement." "They're needed at home," she said, adding that National Guard units were better trained for the mission. □

U.S. cites China, Myanmar, Ethiopia in genocide report

By MATTHEW LEE

AP Diplomatic Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Biden administration on Monday renewed genocide allegations against China for repression of Uyghur Muslims and other minorities in its northwest Xinjiang region. It also warned Eritrea, Ethiopia, Myanmar and South Sudan of possible further sanctions for ethnic cleansing in conflicts they are involved in. The administration sent the messages in the release of the State Department's annual report to Congress on genocide and atrocities prevention, which calls for the federal government to outline steps it is taking to prevent and halt such actions abroad.

"This administration will defend and protect human rights around the world, and recognizes the prevention of atrocities is a core

national security interest and a core moral responsibility," it said.

The report said the U.S. continues to believe that China's actions against the Uyghurs constitutes a "genocide." That finding was first announced by former President Donald Trump's administration, as was a determination that Myanmar was engaged in "ethnic cleansing" against Rohingya Muslims in its northern Rakhine state.

The report noted that Secretary of State Antony Blinken has several times reaffirmed the previous administration's claim that "the People's Republic of China is committing genocide and crimes against humanity against Uyghurs, who are predominantly Muslim, and members of other ethnic and religious minority groups in Xinjiang." Those crimes include imprisonment, torture, enforced steriliza-

tion, and persecution, the report said. It added that President Joe Biden's administration has followed through and expanded on Trump-era sanctions for the alleged atrocities.

The report said Myanmar, also known as Burma, remains at particular risk for genocide. It said the U.S. would continue to coordinate with allies and partners to press the military government there to halt all repression, including crackdowns on dissent that followed a coup in February, as well as the violence against the Rohingya. The report also took Eritrea and Ethiopia to task for ethnic cleansing in their crackdown on dissent in Ethiopia's western Tigray region. Blinken in March told Congress that the actions there amounted to "ethnic cleansing." The administration has since de-

manded a full withdrawal of Eritrean forces from Tigray and has imposed travel bans on certain officials. Elsewhere in Africa, the report cited deteriorating conditions in South Sudan, where it said the government "has perpetrated extrajudicial killings including ethnic-based killings of civilians, widespread sexual violence, and use of food as a weapon of war." "Those responsible for human rights violations in South Sudan must be held to account," it said. The report said the Biden administration would continue to support efforts to bring Islamic State militants to justice for atrocities committed against religious minorities in Iraq and Syria. It also reiterated the U.S. commitment to holding Syrian President Bashar Assad and his government to account for abuses. □

N.J. educator in trans rant beer-toss case sues for defamation

By **WAYNE PARRY**
Associated Press

GALLOWAY, N.J. (AP) — A New Jersey middle school vice principal who was filmed tossing a cup of beer at people who had been recording his wife's rant against an apparent transgender woman's use of a public restroom is suing them for defamation, asserting he never said a word about transgender issues. Michael Smurro, a vice principal at Neptune Middle School who has been on leave without pay since shortly after the April incident at an outdoor restaurant in Galloway Township, has filed a civil suit against four people who are suing him and his wife over the incident.

In his countersuit, Smurro accuses Carolyn DiPietro, Christopher Benino, and Robert and Debra Harris of defamation, and false light invasion of privacy, claiming in the latter charge that the defendants made public statements accusing him

of something he did not do. "Defendant Michael Smurro himself never uttered a word to the plaintiffs or anyone that disparaged transgendered individuals, or in fact any individuals," his attorney Alexander Schachtel wrote in court papers filed earlier this month. "Plaintiffs repeatedly alleged, stated, or implied that (Michael Smurro) had made a transphobic speech or rant, or had leveled bigoted comments towards themselves, when (he) had never actually stated or uttered any such thing." The attorney also wrote in court papers that the identity of the person who used the restroom has never been determined "and it also remains unknown if that person was in fact transgendered or was instead a man who had decided, for whatever reason, to use the ladies' room." Schachtel told The Associated Press on Monday that the civil suit against Smurro is ground-

less because the people who filed it did not suffer any harm.

"Michael is being sued because his wife made comments that offended the sensibilities of the plaintiffs," Schachtel said. "Michael and Lisa Smurro have the right to their opinions and the right to voice them in public, even if some may find them disagreeable. No one should have their livelihood threatened for expressing an opinion. When this story went viral, Michael and Lisa Smurro were viciously attacked and defamed on social media. There was much outrage and little search for the truth. We hope to set the story straight." David Shanies, the lawyer for those suing Smurro, replied, "Some people, when they find themselves in a hole, climb out of it. Other people continue to dig deeper and deeper. Anybody who watches the videos and hears (Lisa Smurro) scream 'She's a man! She's a man!'



In this April 24 2021, file photo, Lisa and Mike Smurro pose for a photo at the annual Renaissance Faire, in Smithville, N.J.

Associated Press

can make their own judgment about whether she's talking about seeing someone she thought was a man as opposed to a transgender woman."

The Smurros and people who say they were hit with beer from his cup when he threw it in their direction have filed criminal complaints in municipal court alleging harassment. That case is pending.

The footage from the outdoor restaurant shows Lisa Smurro complaining at length about a person she apparently believed was a transgender woman using

the women's bathroom. New Jersey law prohibits discrimination based on gender identify and permits people to use public restrooms that correspond to their gender identity.

The footage shows that when the couple became aware someone was filming, they got up and walked over. Lisa Smurro continued to complain and a woman at the table replied: "Please take your hate elsewhere."

Michael Smurro then tossed the contents of a cup of beer at occupants of the table. □

Death toll at Miami-area condo collapse site climbs to 94

By **BOBBY CAINA CALVAN**
Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — The death toll in the Miami-area condominium collapse climbed to 94 Monday as officials planned to step up security at the site to make sure the personal possessions of the victims are preserved for their families.

Miami-Dade County Mayor Daniella Levine Cava said 22 people remain unaccounted for in the June 24 collapse of Champlain Towers South, an oceanside condo building in Surfside. Levine Cava said 83 of the victims have been identified but "the process of making identifications has been made more difficult as time goes on." Surfside Mayor Charles Burkett said officials have decided to increase security around the debris pile to ensure that the site is preserved. Only authorized



Flowers and messages of love adorn a wooden heart marked with the name Francis Fernandez, alongside a memorial wall for the victims of the Champlain Towers South building collapse, on Monday, July 12, 2021, in Surfside, Fla.

Associated Press

personnel will be allowed. "It's obvious that this has become much more than a collapsed building site," Burkett said. "It has become a holy site."

Miami-Dade Police Department Director Alfredo Ramirez III said there has been "no criminality" at

the site, but officials want to make sure the area is secure so crews can continue to preserve personal items found in the rubble.

"As families are being notified about their family members, the ask is always about property. People want some sort of connec-

tion to their family member, so it's very important that our process that we have in place continues to flow uninterrupted," Ramirez said during a morning news conference.

"It's just part of the process. This is a long, painful, hurtful process," he said.

Burkett said work crews recently found a business card for an artist and then found several paintings they carefully pulled out of the debris pile to preserve for family members.

Levine Cava also addressed the announcement Sunday that a vaccinated Miami-Dade county commissioner who helped other local officials in Surfside has tested positive for COVID-19.

The news release from Miami-Dade County Commission Chairman Jose "Pepe" Diaz said he and his chief of staff, Isidoro

Lopez, who also received a vaccine against COVID-19, came down with flu-like symptoms earlier in the day and later tested positive for the virus.

Levine Cava said officials who were in close proximity to Diaz and Lopez have been tested and all have come back negative. Levine Cava and other officials who spoke at Monday's news conference did not wear face masks. Diaz had participated in news conferences and meetings with other officials in Surfside, the Miami Herald reported.

"Breakthrough" infections fully vaccinated individuals who contract the coronavirus do happen, although they are very rare. An Associated Press analysis of government data in May showed only about 1% of such cases resulted in hospitalization or death. □

Top US commander in Afghanistan relinquishes post

By KATHY GANNON

Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) —

The top U.S. commander in Afghanistan relinquished his position at a ceremony in the capital Kabul on Monday, taking the United States a step closer to ending its 20-year war. The move came as Taliban insurgents continue to gain territory across the country. Another four-star general will assume authority from his U.S.-based post to conduct possible airstrikes in defense of Afghan government forces, at least until the U.S. withdrawal concludes by Aug. 31.

Gen. Scott Miller served as America's top commander in Afghanistan since 2018. He handed over command of what has become known as America's "forever war" in its waning days to Marine Gen. Frank McKenzie, the head of U.S. Central Command. McKenzie will operate from Central Command headquarters in Tampa, Florida.

During the handover, McKenzie credited Miller with getting U.S. troops home safely and moving out millions of tons of equipment. That has rankled some Af-



U.S. Army Gen. Scott Miller, the top U.S. commander in Afghanistan, speaks at a ceremony where he relinquished his command, at Resolute Support headquarters, in Kabul, Afghanistan, Monday, July 12, 2021.

Associated Press

ghan security officials who complained that equipment that could have been left for Afghanistan's security forces was taken. Afghanistan's National Security Adviser Hamdullah Mohib, who attended the handover, said the U.S. and NATO withdrawal has left a vacuum that resulted in Afghanistan's national secu-

rity forces stranded on the battlefield without supplies, sometimes running out of food and ammunition.

In comments after the ceremony, Mohib said the greatest impact of the withdrawal is a lack of aircraft to resupply troops. Currently, the government is regrouping to retake strategic areas and defend its

cities against Taliban advances.

The handover took place in the heavily fortified Resolute Support headquarters in the heart of Kabul at a time of rapid territorial gains by Taliban insurgents across Afghanistan.

Abdullah Abdullah, chief of Afghanistan's National Council for Reconciliation,

was in attendance. He dismissed suggestions the Taliban could stage a military takeover.

"I'm worried, of course, when the Taliban are pushing for a military solution, that's a cause of concern ... but they cannot impose their will upon the nation militarily," he said.

Last month, Abdullah traveled with President Ashraf Ghani to Washington, where President Joe Biden assured the leaders the U.S. would continue its humanitarian support. While he said there would no longer be military boots on the ground, the U.S. was not abandoning the country's security needs.

In a flag-passing ceremony, Miller remembered the U.S. and NATO troops killed in the nearly 20-year war as well as the thousands of Afghans who lost their lives.

The outgoing commander said he has told Taliban officials "it's important that the military sides set the conditions for a peaceful and political settlement in Afghanistan. ... But we know that with that violence, it would be very difficult to achieve a political settlement." □

U.S.-Russia say climate talks a springboard to ease tensions

MOSCOW (AP) — U.S. climate envoy John Kerry and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov expressed hope on Monday that climate change talks could act as a springboard to help reduce escalating tensions between the two rivals nations.

Kerry met Lavrov as part of his four-day visit to Moscow as tensions continue to complicate the two countries' bilateral relations. Kerry is the highest-ranking official from President Joe Biden's administration to visit Russia so far.

Lavrov said that Russia "attaches great importance" to the issues of climate change and will continue to cooperate with other nations on these issues.

Russia's top diplomat said Kerry's Moscow visit sends

"an important and a positive signal for development of our bilateral relations, for alleviating the tension, and establishing substantive and professional work in the areas where we can find a common denominator."

Kerry said he believed there was "space" for Russia and the U.S. "to collaborate on this (climate change issues) and perhaps to be able to open up some better opportunities on other issues, as we do cooperate on this."

The U.S. official said climate change is as important a challenge as any the two men had negotiated in the past such as nuclear weapons.

"We spent years, you and I, negotiating on worse. We negotiated on chemi-

cal weapons, we negotiated on nuclear weapons. I would say to you without any reservation, this is absolutely as critical, as compelling, as urgent an issue, as any of those others," Kerry said.

The U.S. follows China as global leaders in climate-damaging emissions of coal and petroleum fumes. But Russia, the world's No. 4 because of its dependence on coal for power generation, is an outsize contributor to climate change relative to the size of its economy and population.

Kerry, former Secretary of State in the Obama administration, is encouraging other governments to commit to tough targets to cut emissions ahead of a U.N. global climate sum-



Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, left, welcomes U.S. climate envoy John Kerry for the talks during their meeting in Moscow, Russia, Monday, July 12, 2021.

Associated Press

mit later this year.

Russian President Vladimir Putin took part by video in Biden's April climate summit. But the Russian leader's government has set only unambitious goals for cutting emissions as the waste from burning fossil

fuels heats up the planet.

Kerry's trip comes as the two nations spar over ransomware attacks blamed on gangs linked to Russia, putting Biden under domestic pressure to punish Russia over the hacking. □

U.S. expert: Images show Chinese ship waste endangering reefs

By **JIM GOMEZ**

Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines (AP)

— Swarms of Chinese vessels have dumped human waste and wastewater for years in a disputed area of the South China Sea, causing algae blooms that have damaged coral reefs and threatened fish in an unfolding catastrophe, a U.S.-based expert said Monday. Satellite images over the last five years show how human waste, sewage and wastewater have accumulated and caused algae in a cluster of reefs in the Spratlys region where hundreds of Chinese fishing ships have anchored in batches, said Liz Derr, who heads Similarity Inc., a software company creating artificial intelligence technologies for satellite imagery analysis.

At least 236 ships were spotted in the atoll, internationally known as Union Banks, on June 17 alone, she said at a Philippine online news forum on China's actions in the South China Sea, which Beijing has claimed virtually in its entirety.

"When the ships don't move, the poop piles up," Derr said.

"The hundreds of ships that are anchored in the Spratlys are dumping raw sewage onto the reefs they are occupying."

Chinese officials did not immediately react to Derr's assessment of the environ-

by Philippine authorities before a decision on whether to lodge a protest against

attack on the Philippines might activate a mutual defense treaty.

and planes after the U.S.S. Benfold entered waters claimed by Beijing around the Paracel Islands.

In March, Philippine authorities spotted more than 200 Chinese fishing vessels at Whitsun Reef, in the north-eastern periphery of Union Banks, and demanded that China withdraw them from the area. China ignored the demand for weeks, while continuing to assert the reef is its own territory.

The Philippines argued that Whitsun Reef lies well within an internationally recognized stretch of waters where it has exclusive rights to exploit fisheries, oil, gas and other sea resources. It cited the international tribunal's 2016 ruling that invalidated China's vast claims to the waterway on historical grounds and unanimously upheld the Philippines' sovereign rights to the so-called exclusive economic zone.

A few hundred protesters held a noisy rally Monday in front of the Chinese Consulate in Manila to mark the fifth anniversary of the ruling, which China ignored and continues to defy.

The protesters lashed out at President Rodrigo Duterte, who has nurtured closer ties with Beijing, for refusing to aggressively demand that China comply with the landmark ruling. □



In this March 7, 2021 handout photo provided by the Philippine Coast Guard/National Task Force-West Philippine Sea, some of the 220 Chinese vessels are seen moored at Whitsun Reef, South China Sea.

Associated Press

mental damage, but have said in the past that they have taken steps to protect the fisheries stock and the environment in the South China Sea.

Aside from the Chinese, Vietnamese forces have also occupied some coral outcrops in Union Banks, which is also claimed by the Philippines, although it has no presence in the vast atoll.

Department of Foreign Affairs Assistant Secretary Eduardo Menez in Manila said the findings would have to be assessed and validated

China could be made.

"This is a catastrophe of epic proportions and we are close to the point of no return," Derr said.

She warned that schools of fish, including migratory tuna, breed in the reefs that are being damaged and could cause fish stocks to considerably decline in an offshore area that is a key regional food source.

Separately, China's military said it chased a U.S. warship out of another disputed area of the South China Sea on Monday after Washington warned an

Beijing affirmed its claims to portions of the sea that also are claimed by South-east Asia governments. It rejected the Biden administration's declaration of support Sunday for an 2016 international tribunal ruling in favor of the Philippines that threw out most of them.

China is increasingly assertive about pressing its territorial claims, which are fueling tension with neighbors including Japan, India, Vietnam and the Philippines.

China's People's Liberation Army said it sent ships

Dutch leader says easing lockdown was 'error of judgment'

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP)

— The Dutch leader apologized Monday for what he called "an error of judgment" in relaxing the Netherlands' coronavirus lockdown, a move that has led to a sharp surge in infections.

Caretaker Prime Minister Mark Rutte's government scrapped most remaining restrictions just over three weeks ago amid declining infection numbers and hospital admissions. The easing meant that, among other public spaces, nightclubs and discotheques were al-

lowed to reopen for the first time in more than a year.

On the first weekend after the relaxation, thousands of mainly young people flocked to clubs in towns and cities across the country. Since then, infections have skyrocketed. Rutte was forced to backtrack and on Friday reintroduced some measures to rein in the virus' spread.

On Saturday, the country's public health institute reported more than 10,000 new COVID-19 cases, the highest number of positive tests since late December.

"An error of judgment was made, we are sorry about that," Rutte told reporters in The Hague.

Caretaker Health Minister Hugo de Jonge said the relaxation combined with a lack of social distancing and the delta variant "has had, of course, an accelerating effect. You can unfortunately see that with hindsight."

The Netherlands is not alone in facing soaring infections. Countries across Europe are scrambling to accelerate coronavirus vaccinations in the hope



Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte arrives for an EU summit at the European Council building in Brussels, Thursday, June 24, 2021.

Associated Press

of outpacing the spread of the more infectious delta variant.

More than 46% of the Netherlands' adult population is fully vaccinated and more

than 77% of adults have had at least one shot. Health authorities say they will administer first or second shots to more than 1.3 million people this week. □



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Police patrol Havana in large numbers after demonstrations

By **ANDREA RODRIGUEZ**
Associated Press

HAVANA (AP) — Large contingents of Cuban police patrolled the capital of Havana on Monday following protests around the island nation against food shortages and high prices amid the coronavirus crisis. Cuba's president said the demonstrations were stirred up on social media by Cuban-Americans in the United States.

Many young people took part in the Sunday protests in Havana, which disrupted traffic until police moved in after several hours and broke up the march when a few protesters threw rocks. That demonstration and others in communities around the tightly controlled country were one of the biggest displays of antigovernment sentiment in decades, and authorities appeared determined to put a stop to it. Internet service was also spotty, possibly indicating an effort to prevent protesters from communicating with each other. "We've seen how the campaign against Cuba was growing on social media in the last weeks," President Miguel Díaz-Canel said Monday in a nationally televised appearance in which his entire Cabinet was also present.

"That's the way it's done: Try to create inconformity, dissatisfaction by manipulating emotions and feelings," Díaz-Canel said.

In a statement, U.S. President Joe Biden said Cuban protesters were asserting their basic rights.

"We stand with the Cuban people and their clarion call for freedom and relief from the tragic grip of the pandemic and from the decades of repression and economic suffering to



Police stand guard near the National Capitol building in Havana, Cuba, Monday, July 12, 2021, the day after protests against food shortages and high prices amid the coronavirus crisis.

Associated Press

which they have been subjected by Cuba's authoritarian regime," Biden said. The U.S. urges the Cuban government to serve their people "rather than enriching themselves," Biden said.

In the Havana protest, police initially trailed behind as protesters chanted, "Freedom!" "Enough!" and "Unite!" One motorcyclist pulled out a U.S. flag, but it was snatched from him by others.

"We are fed up with the queues, the shortages. That's why I'm here," one middle-age protester told The Associated Press. He declined to identify himself for fear of being arrested later.

Later, about 300 pro-government protesters arrived with a large Cuban flag, shouting slogans in favor of the late President Fidel Castro and the Cuban revolution. Some assaulted an AP videojournalist, smashing his camera. AP photojournalist Ramón Espinosa was then beaten by a group of

police officers in uniforms and civilian clothes; he suffered a broken nose and an eye injury.

Cuba is going through its worst economic crisis in decades, along with a resurgence of coronavirus cases, as it suffers the consequences of U.S. sanctions imposed by the former President Donald Trump's administration.

An official in the Biden administration tweeted support for Sunday's demonstrations.

"Peaceful protests are growing in #Cuba as the Cuban people exercise their right to peaceful assembly to express concern about rising COVID cases/deaths & medicine shortages. We commend the numerous efforts of the Cuban people mobilizing donations to help neighbors in need," tweeted Julie Chung, acting assistant secretary of state for Western Hemisphere affairs.

Cuba's director general for U.S. affairs, Carlos F. de Cossio, dismissed her re-

marks in his own tweet: "US State Department and its officials, involved to their necks in promoting social and political instability in #Cuba, should avoid expressing hypocritical concern for a situation they have been betting on. Cuba is and will continue to be a peaceful country, contrary to the US."

The demonstration grew to a few thousand in the vicinity of Galeano Avenue and the marchers pressed on despite a few charges by police officers and tear gas barrages.

People standing on many balconies along the central artery in the Centro Habana neighborhood applauded the protesters passing by. Others joined in the march. □




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Exemption on COVID-19 testing requirement for US Visitors

ORANJESTAD — In its ongoing efforts to make travel to One happy island as convenient and safe as possible, and as part of the Traveler Health Requirements, the Aruban government is happy to announce that, as of July 14th, 2021, some U.S. residents who are fully vaccinated for COVID-19 may be exempt from the COVID-19 testing requirement for entry to Aruba.

The Aruban government will still require that the proof of vaccination meet the requirements as part of the Aruba online Embarkation/Disembarkation (ED Card) process. While the program is being introduced for eligible travelers, other travelers who may not be eligible will still need to provide a negative COVID-19 test prior to entry to Aruba.

To determine if you may be eligible, please read the information provided in detail and review the steps required. Note: all protocols are subject to change at the discretion of the Aruban government, so please

check back frequently for updates.

Who is eligible?

At this time, U.S. residents are able to travel to Aruba without providing proof of a negative COVID-19 test if they meet all of the following requirements:

- Have been vaccinated with an FDA or EMA authorized COVID-19 vaccine in the U.S. At this moment, these are Pfizer / BioNTech (Comirnaty), Moderna (Spikevax), AstraZeneca (Vaxzevria) and Johnson & Johnson (Janssen).
- Are fully vaccinated for COVID-19: Either receiving both doses for 2-dose vaccines (a single dose for 1-dose vaccines).
- 14 days must have passed since they received their last COVID-19 vaccine before traveling.
- Have a SMART® Health Card vaccine record.
- And use the CommonPass digital health app as part of Aruba's ED

Card online travel qualification process before their flight.

What is a smart health card?

A SMART Health Card is a paper or digital version of your clinical information, such as vaccination history or test results. They allow you to keep a copy of your records on hand and easily share this information with others if you choose. SMART Health Cards contain this information in a format that is secure, portable, and easy for entities like airlines, governments, and venues to verify. When scanned, a verifier can easily see that the information on the card has not been tampered with, making SMART Health Cards a safe and reliable way to demonstrate health status.

Learn more on the SMART Health Card website.

Where do I get my smart health card?

SMART Health Cards are digitally verifiable vaccination records that are provided by pharmacies,

doctor's offices, or state registries.

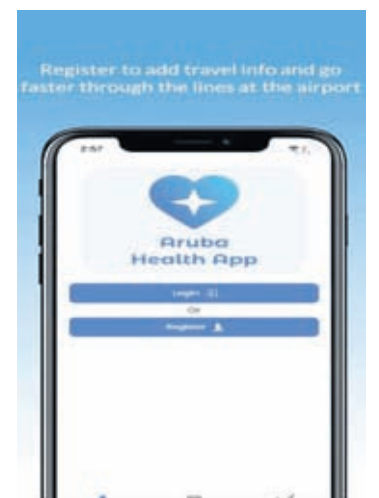
At this time, the following vaccination providers provide SMART Health Cards:

- For those vaccinated at any U.S. Walmart pharmacy.
- For those vaccinated at any U.S. Sam's Club pharmacy.
- For those vaccinated at any healthcare provider in California.
- For those vaccinated at any healthcare provider in Louisiana.

How do I show proof of vaccination?

The SMART Health Card proof of vaccination needs to be presented before your flight to Aruba as part of Aruba's online ED Card travel qualification process. For this, you will need to use the CommonPass digital health app to store your SMART Health Card.

- If the CommonPass app asks, use the invitation code 2ARUBA (starting July 14th)
- Create a "Travel to Aruba" pass in CommonPass by scanning or



uploading your SMART Health Card.

- Your minted pass will show a CommonPass ID under the QR code, use this when completing your Aruba online ED Card process for instant vaccine verification.

With your ED Card approved and upon arrival in Aruba as a vaccinated traveler, you'll have access to the airport's convenient Pre-approved Health Lane, making your travel experience seamless.

For more information go to www.aruba.com and click on health requirements. □

The Centrale Bank van Aruba projects a stronger recovery of the Aruban economy during 2021

ORANJESTAD — The Centrale Bank van Aruba (CBA) recently updated its previously published Gross Domestic Product (GDP) estimates and outlook for 2020 and 2021, and published its results today. The complete publication titled "Economic Snapshot: The current GDP outlook for Aruba, more than one year into the COVID-19 pandemic" is available on the CBA's website (www.cbaruba.org).

Following a 22.3 percent contraction in real GDP in 2020 due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, economic activity for 2021 is expected to accelerate, based upon economic developments and available data up to and including April 2021. For 2021, real GDP is expected to grow by 15.5 percent under the optimistic scenario, 12.7 percent under the baseline scenario, and 8.2 percent under the pessimistic scenario. Despite this substantial increase, the level of economic activity in 2021 will remain significantly lower than the 2019-level.

The main driver for the 2021 envisaged significant recovery in economic activities is the tourism sector, which is expected to continue its path to a relatively strong recovery. The latter is to be driven by a firm rebound in U.S. travel demand, pushed up by a solid pick-up of the U.S. economy, strengthened by accelerated vaccination gains, and robust government stimulus programs. The two above-mentioned scenarios deviate from the baseline based upon the expected number of stay-over visitors in 2021 and its impact on the export of services, benchmarked against the 2019-level. The optimistic scenario assumes stay-over visitors to recover to 58.0 percent of the 2019-level, the baseline 55.0 percent, and the pessimistic scenario 49.0 percent. It is noteworthy that tourism spending is anticipated to surpass the 2019-level as visitors appear eager to spend, as well as incur additional costs related to COVID-19 testing and insurance.

Table: Real GDP growth and its components 2019-2021 (in percent)

Indicator	2019 e	2020 e	2021 o f	2021 b f	2021 p f
Economic outlook (June 2021)					
GDP	-2.2	-22.3	15.5	12.7	8.2
Consumption	-1.6	-7.7	1.0	1.0	0.8
Private consumption	1.3	-11.9	2.6	2.5	2.2
Public consumption	-8.3	3.4	-2.4	-2.4	-2.4
Investment	-0.2	-20.9	-15.7	-19.2	-22.6
Private investment	1.5	-21.4	-14.3	-17.9	-21.5
Public investment	-37.2	-0.7	-54.8	-54.8	-54.8
Export	0.6	-44.4	50.6	42.0	27.6
Tourism export	-0.6	-51.9	70.2	59.8	41.0
Import	1.9	-27.1	11.3	7.8	2.3

Sources: CBA

A different unemployment rate, given the recovery of the tourism sector, is assumed in each scenario. These developments in unemployment have a substantial impact on consumption. Particularly, the continuation of the Government of Aruba's wage subsidy program is essential in supporting employment and thereby private consumption, if the labor market does not recover strong enough to reach pre-COVID employment levels. The FASE program and the drawing down of savings also help to maintain a given level of private consumption.

The cutbacks in government spending as aspired in the government's draft budget for 2021, as well as liquidity constraints, dampen public consumption and public investment. Meanwhile, private investment is foreseen to contract in 2021, where each scenario assumes a different execution pace of construction projects. □

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297 Baseball Academy signs collegiate letter of intent with two local baseball players



ORANJESTAD — On July 11, 2021 in a ceremony at Paseo Herencia 297 Baseball Academy officially recruits baseball players Jeremy Kelly and William de la Cruz by signing their collegiate letter of intent to play baseball at NCAA Division III Framingham State Uni-

versity in Massachusetts.

Kelly and De la Cruz will be playing under Head Coach Sean Callahan and Assistant Coaches David Walsh and Len Ferrari. Both players are playing in the Summer Prospect League at Nadi Croes Crismo An-

gela Stadium. The league is for players interested in playing college baseball. Games take place on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday's.

297 Baseball Academy owned and operated by Brodie Carey believes that young players need the right exposure to play at the next level. Their mission is to help young student athletes reach their goals while providing an experience and an opportunity



to grow while maximizing their recruiting potential. Therefore 297 Baseball Academy is giving their professional guidance and resources to match the

need of these athlete.

Congratulations to Jeremy Kelly and William de la Cruz with your achievement. □



Special honoring at the Marriott Ocean Club



PALM BEACH — Recently, Marouska Heyliger OF THE Aruba tourism Authority, had the great pleasure to honor Loyal and friendly visitors of Aruba as Goodwill Ambassadors at their home away from home. The symbolic honorary title is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism, as a token of appreciation to the guests who visit Aruba between 10-20-35 and more consecutive years.

The honorees were:

John & Jacqueline Falconieri, residents

of Scotch Plains New Jersey.

This lovely couple have many reasons why they keep coming to their beloved island. The weather and facilities are always perfect, the Aruban people are always pleasant and accommodating and the food selection island wide is delicious & healthy.

Marouska Heyliger thanked them for choosing Aruba as their vacation destination and as their home away from home for so many years together with the members of Marriott Ocean Club. □



Article by Etnia Nativa

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Aruba Rock Art

Episode CXII - 112

NOORD — In the world, rock art is the ethnic heritage of a tribal existence and the most important visual record of humanity's ancient past that, if irretrievably damaged, is lost forever.

The visual impact of rock art made thousands of years ago is a powerful reminder of the artistic skills and sophistication of the belief systems of our ancient ancestors. The term "rock art" refers to images depicted on immovable natural rock surfaces, such as bluff faces, cave walls, and large boulders. The painted images are called pictographs, while the pecked, carved, or incised images are called petroglyphs. Occasionally these techniques were combined to produce painted petroglyphs. Aruba has an important collection of prehistoric rock art sites: In Arikok we find the most beautiful rock art collections in Aruba.

Another interesting site is Casibari Rock formation located towards the center of the island north of Hooiberg. The rocks of this formation are composed of quartz diorite. Evidence of prehistoric rock drawings is still visible in the formation.

Siribana site located in Santa Cruz district is the only known place that we can depict Petroglyph on the whole island. Petroglyphs are designs that have been scratched, carved or chiseled on the rock surface, exposing the less weathered rock, in this case lighter colored stone, which on its part gives the expression its contrast. During the course of a few decades, this site has



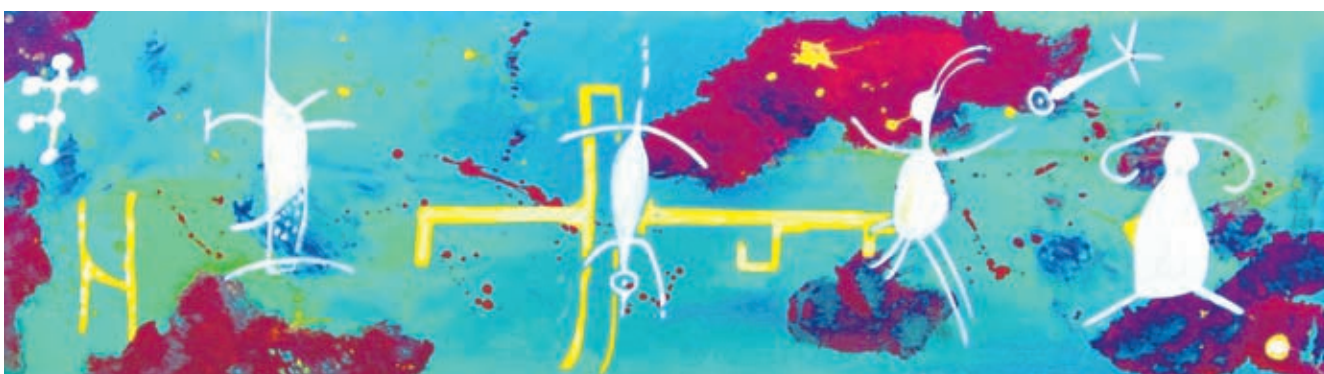
become almost impossible to reach. This due to the less hospitable conditions that have formed in relation to former access routes for visitors. A very difficult terrain, it has become when going up for the less experienced outdoors men. Thick xerophytic veg-

etation has covering a great part of what used to be old paths use by the natives to climb up to these mystical grounds since bay gone times.

Weburi is another very interesting place situated South of Piedra Plat's Protestant Church. Weburi, as we are told stands for; boulders standing in the blowing wind. This amazing site has some minor difficulties to find the entrance, however, once the entrance is located and one has made it inside the hollow rock bolder, the mystical drawings are all over the interior wall and can best observed.

While efforts have been made to educate the general public to participate in the conservation of our Natural Heritage, the same unfortunately cannot be said of rock-art situated in the open-air.

Etnia Nativa archaeological art works are an unique depiction of Aruba's Native Rock Art. Mystical expressions, ancestral teachings, messages from the past. □



To get to know more over Aruba's and its origins, its animals and culture, we highly recommend you to book your visit for our renowned cultural encounter session has been entertaining curious participants for decades.

Mail us at etnianativa03@gmail.com to confirm your participation. Our facilities and activities take place close to high rise hotels.

As fears about climate grow, Siemens CEO sees opportunities

By TOM KRISHER
AP Business Writer

DETROIT (AP)—As the world increasingly focuses attention on climate change, Roland Busch, the CEO of Siemens AG, says his company is well-positioned to help manage the challenges.

Munich-based Siemens specializes in making buildings, factories and railroads more efficient through digitalization and automation. And its medical unit includes technology that could lead to faster treatments for stroke patients. Siemens has predicted 5% to 7% annual revenue growth for the next three to five years, based largely on its expectation that demand for its products involved in energy efficiency will steadily increase. Siemens' stock is up roughly 14% this year. And 13 of 21 industry analysts who follow it give the company a buy rating, according to FactSet.

Busch, who became CEO in February, has been with Siemens for more than a quarter-century.

The Associated Press spoke recently with him about energy savings, manufacturing efficiencies, medical imaging and the future of rail travel. The interview was edited for clarity and length.

Q: The United States and other countries are emphasizing efficient buildings as one way to fight climate change. Is that what's fueling much of your growth predictions?

A: We talked about our core markets, 440 billion euros, growing 4% or 5%. These are already markets driven by sustainability as well as automation and digitalization, which is, I think, where all the stimulus money goes. Why would

you invest in old stuff when you really can stimulate the new?

ceutical. We help them bring the vaccinations to market in shorter time, but

how to automate manufacturing. Once you simulate it, you don't need to

given decreased mass transit ridership due to the coronavirus?

A: Operators who run public transport see this whole thing coming back as life gets normal. It's a problem currently but that will fade away.

Any large city without public transport, it will not function. We discussed whether we would put money into the next generation of high-speed trains. We have prototypes running. This may be one of the finest trains Siemens has ever built. It runs about 300 kilometers (186 mph) an hour. It has the highest efficiency.

It has an aerodynamic profile. It works with different propulsion systems, is lightweight. Eventually you will see less and less national cities connected by flights. Wherever you have a good one-to-one connection with a high speed train, you can eliminate flights totally. We have a good business, globally. I do believe that has a good future.

Q: You've said you can use medical imaging to cut stroke treatment costs in half. How would you do that?

A: There are some cities where if you have a stroke, you're better off. A person has a stroke, so an ambulance comes, brings you to a hospital. You get a scan. Then you need a specialist for surgery.

Very often the person doesn't sit at the hospital closest to where the person has a stroke. So you either put the person in a helicopter or you fly the surgeon to the hospital. This takes another half an hour, hour.

If every second counts, that's a problem. A startup we acquired is doing high-precision surgery by joystick.

One hundred miles apart, you have the best surgeon working with good equipment, which also ensures that you have a very precision movement.

That cuts the time substantially. I think they are working on getting an approval for some of the procedures. It will take a couple of years. □



This photo provided by Siemens shows Siemens CEO Roland Busch. This photo provided by Siemens shows Siemens CEO Roland Busch.

Associated Press

Your new administration has clear targets to expand or defend technology leadership against others, eventually China. We can contribute. We have very strong software business in the United States. A very strong footprint in building technologies.

Q: How would a consumer benefit from factory automation?

A: Let me start with the automotive industry. If you are building a combustion engine and a hybrid-electric battery vehicle at the same factory, you have to manage all the variants as products are personalized. We help with either the software of the automation or the personalization (with many combinations of options).

A second example is what we do in terms of pharma-

also ramp up faster. A new mutant comes, a new kind of vaccination is needed, to make it fast.

One day you produce a vaccination for COVID, another one for whatever kind of disease you want to fight.

Q: How does Siemens help make vaccines faster?

A: You create a digital twin of your products. You're simulating what your products look like. GSK is a pharmaceutical company that provides raw material to vaccination providers. They have to do a lot of tests and different mixes. We simulated that with them, so they could really shorten time to market by 20% or even more.

We make a different twin of your manufacturing and look at how to get rid of bottlenecks in assembly lines,

try it and change it again. You do it right the first time, wrap up your manufacturing fast.

Q: How does Siemens make a building more efficient?

A: Something like 70 percent of the energy consumption is still in buildings. Heat goes through the roof. If you cover your roof properly, most of the job is done. You have automation technology, which is using every device that you have in a smarter way.

The next big thing is the decentralized energy system. You combine it with rooftop photovoltaic (solar cells), eventually a (natural) gas engine, which provides energy for a campus with a lower energy footprint. Battery storage, fitting the whole thing with renewables. It's meaningless to cool a building if there's nobody in it. We have a software company which is managing buildings. You just gear it for the needs of the people who are currently in the room or who are going to be in the room.

Q: You make high-speed rail and transit system rail cars. Do you see growth,



CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 42 Suit material
 - 1 Frugal fellow
 - 6 Scout settlements
 - 11 Aunt's spouse
 - 12 Dote on
 - 13 Kitchen appliance
 - 15 Finish
 - 16 Tea cooler
 - 17 Mendes of movies
 - 18 Ruin
 - 20 Ready to go
 - 21 Rooster's mate
 - 22 Three squared
 - 23 Seedy bars
 - 26 Searches
 - 27 Pennsylvania port
 - 28 Bowler or boater
 - 29 Sock part
 - 30 Armed helicopter
 - 34 Print units
 - 35 Easter find
 - 36 Lyricist Gershwin
 - 37 Kitchen appliance
 - 40 Deux follower
 - 41 Deal maker
- DOWN**
- 1 Under-stated
 - 2 Self-contained
 - 3 A lot
 - 4 High trains
 - 5 Stops working
 - 6 Music's Mariah
 - 7 Commotion
 - 8 Takes up residence
 - 9 Stop
 - 10 Law-making groups
 - 14 Bus. sch. course
 - 19 Quaker's pronoun
 - 22 Squirrel's cache
 - 23 Spots
 - 24 Smelter's need
 - 25 Tries to get
 - 26 Letter-guessing game
 - 28 Enormous
 - 30 Honking birds
 - 31 Walks in the woods
 - 32 Singer Cara
 - 33 Divides
 - 38 Pear-shaped fruit
 - 39 Previous-ly

S	P	L	A	T	A	C	E	D
Q	U	A	S	I	D	U	P	E
U	N	T	I	L	D	R	I	F
A	C	T	L	E	E	S	I	R
T	H	E	D	E	A	D	Z	O
		A	R	T	I	D	E	S
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T	H	E	D	A	R	K	H	A
S	A	G	M	O	I	L	I	E
O	B	A	M	A	N	A	I	V
N	O	N	O	S	I	R	K	E
D	O	E	S	S	E	E	R	S

Yesterday's answer

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11					12				
13				14					
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18			19				20		
			21			22			
23	24	25			26				
27				28					
29			30				31	32	33
34			35				36		
37		38				39			
40					41				
42					43				

7-13

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

7-13

CRYPTOQUOTE

J Y N G K I T G S C W G K I T

K Q Y R T N B O K I T T O K I T K B D

W G N W O K C T O O . — Q Y X

M Q Y U M S Q X

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: THE THEATER WAS CREATED TO TELL PEOPLE THE TRUTH ABOUT LIFE AND THE SOCIAL SITUATION. — STELLA ADLER



In this Sept. 26, 2018, file photo, provided by the National Park Service, a 4-year-old female gray wolf emerges from her cage as it is released at Isle Royale National Park in Michigan.

Associated Press

Scientists: Pup births hopeful sign for Isle Royale wolves

By JOHN FLESHER

AP Environmental Writer

TRAVERSE CITY, Mich. (AP) — Wolf pups have been spotted again on Isle Royale, a hopeful sign in the effort to rebuild the predator species' population at the U.S. national park, scientists said Monday.

It's unknown how many gray wolves roam the island chain in northwestern Lake Superior. The coronavirus pandemic forced cancellation of the census that Michigan Technological University experts had conducted each winter for 63 years.

Remote cameras detected four pups on the park's eastern end in January, the researchers said in a new report. The sightings, and additional clues such as previously observed scats and tracks, suggest that two litters were born in the area last year and perhaps another on the western side.

Park officials said last fall that at least two pups likely were born in 2019.

The population was 12 to 14 during the last Michigan Tech survey in winter 2020. The latest births would indicate it is higher now, but some older wolves may have died.

"It most likely will be winter of next year before we have firm information," said Sarah Hoy, a research assistant professor and animal ecologist, adding that the presence of young wolves is reason for optimism. "Things are definitely looking up."

Scientists with Michigan Tech, the National Park Service and State University of New York will combine available information with genetic analyses to produce a population estimate based on death rates and numbers of litters.

An initial data summary should be finished this month, said Mark Romanski, a biologist and natural resources program manager at Isle Royale.

"Because of constraints placed on field

activities during the pandemic, we are especially pleased to have multiple lines of evidence to enumerate the population," he said.

Wolves are believed to have migrated to Isle Royale from Minnesota or the Canadian province of Ontario around the middle of the 20th century, crossing about 15 miles (24 kilometers) over the frozen lake surface.

Once established, they began feasting on the park's abundant moose and helped keep the herd from outgrowing its food supply. But wolf numbers plummeted in the past decade, which scientists blamed primarily on inbreeding.

The National Park Service announced plans in 2018 to restore the population, which had fallen to two. Crews took 19 wolves from Minnesota, Ontario and Michigan's Upper Peninsula to the island in a series of airlifts. Some have died and at least one wandered back to the mainland but most appear to be settling in.

"They're killing moose, starting to function as they should," Hoy said.

The goal is to have 20-30 wolves within three to five years. Officials haven't decided whether to bring more in, park spokeswoman Liz Valencia said.

"A healthy park ecosystem includes a variety of wildlife and abundant food sources," said Christine Goepfert, Midwest associate director for the National Parks Conservation Association. "As wolves bounce back after nearly disappearing from the park, their presence as a predator on the island will help all wildlife and native plants thrive at Isle Royale."

The wolves' decline fueled a moose boom between 2012 and 2019, when the population may have reached 2,000 before dropping to 1,876 last year. It appears to have fallen further since, the report said. □

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Oliver Stone revisits JFK assassination in new documentary

By JAKE COYLE

AP Film Writer

CANNES, France (AP) —

Thirty years after "JFK," Oliver Stone has returned to the assassination of John F. Kennedy, this time in a documentary.

"JFK Revisited: Through the Looking Glass" is a kind of non-fiction addendum to one of Stone's most sensational and controversial films. The documentary, which is to premiere Monday at the Cannes Film Festival, is likely to prompt another round of debate on both the American tragedy and Stone's methods. But for the 74-year-old filmmaker, it was a way to answer his critics and go deeper into a history he's forever linked with. "I was a relative novice when that film came out. I was naïve. I didn't know that I'd get banged like this and it was hard," Stone said in an interview. "It became as if I was untrustworthy. In Hollywood, I became labeled a 'conspiracy theorist' which I think is a term from a 1952 CIA document an attempt to discredit people. But people liked the movie. As a movie-movie, it worked." "JFK" was nominated for eight Oscars, including best picture, and won two. It grossed more than \$200 million. But it was also surrounded by questions about its factuality. "JFK Revisited" has doubts attached to it, too. Several streaming services passed on distributing the film in



Oliver Stone poses for portrait photographs for the film 'JFK Revisited: Through the Looking Glass', at the 74th international film festival, Cannes, southern France, Sunday, July 11, 2021.

Associated Press

part over their fact checks. In Cannes, the film has set up international releases in several countries and is seeking a U.S. distributor. The documentary, which has been edited down to around two hours after being twice that, makes no declarations about who killed Kennedy. It pulls in part from millions of government files that have been released in the years since "JFK." In 2017, President Donald Trump delayed the release of more documents, citing national security. "JFK Revisited" delves deeply into inconsistencies in Kennedy's autopsy, the handling of key pieces of evidence and Lee Harvey

Oswald's alleged ties to the CIA. And its deepest suspicions not unlike "JFK" lie in the U.S. intelligence services. "I feel the most important is why President Kennedy was killed," said Stone. "We answered with our evidence that he was going to withdraw from Vietnam. The détente with Cuba was in motion. The nuclear test ban treaty had been signed. He was looking for a détente with Russia. He was an anti-colonialist." Stone, whose films include "Platoon" and "Born on the Fourth of July," himself fought in Vietnam. "I went in as a hawk. I believed we were doing the right thing," he said. "Even

when I came out of Vietnam, I was not an activist. It takes years to reeducate yourself. And I found out more and more. By the time I made ("JFK"), I didn't know what I know now. The history of this country is screwed up. We haven't told it." In films like "Wall Street," "Nixon" and "W.," Stone has charted through his own provocative lens much of the last 50 years of American history in movies that gave politically charged figures splashy big-screen portraits. But his relationship with both Hollywood and Washington has declined in more recent years. His last fiction film was 2016's "Snowden," a bi-

opic that depicted Edward Snowden as an American hero. It was painstaking to get funded and little noticed on release.

"It kind of broke my spirit," said Stone.

His skepticism for American democracy has only increased. "A plutocracy is more accurate," he said, citing the influence of money in elections. "Democracy is a strange word. It's in question."

At the same time, Stone has been drawn to meeting and documenting some of the world's dictators and strongmen. Stone interviewed Russia's Vladimir Putin at length for a Showtime series that was criticized as fawning. He has done interviews with Fidel Castro, Hugo Chavez and Stone is currently prepping a series with the former Kazakhstan leader Nursultan Nazarbayev.

"Balance of power is the only way this world can be free of one control, one tyrant. That's the real tyrant. America."

"I'm not a bad guy," Stone added. "And I don't love dictators."

As for Stone's relationship to Hollywood, he said he tries not to think about too much. "I just try to keep going," Stone said. In Cannes, he also screened a director's cut of "JFK." But when he considers the kinds of movies that get made today in the U.S., he sees little political inquiry or international perspective. □

Nickelodeon celebrates 'Blue's Clues' anniversary with movie



This undated image released by Nickelodeon shows Joshua Dela Cruz who stars in the reboot of the preschool TV show "Blue's Clues," called "Blue's Clues & You!"

Associated Press

By The Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Nickelodeon says it is making a new movie featuring stars of "Blues Clues & You!" to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the original show that was a mainstay of the network for several years. The movie, which will start production this summer, follows Josh and Blue as they travel to New York City to audition for a Broadway musical. It's not clear when it will be

ready, a spokeswoman said Monday. Nickelodeon has several other activities planned to mark the Sept. 8, 1996, premiere of the original "Blue's Clues," which aired six seasons' worth of originals. The celebration includes a music video featuring current star Josh Dela Cruz and former "Blue's Clues" hosts Steve Burns and Donovan Patton. Some original episodes of "Blue's Clues" can be

seen on the Paramount+ streaming service and, per Monday's announcement, more will be made available to coincide with the anniversary. The show was rebooted as "Blue's Clues & You" and is currently in its second season. "Blues Clues & You" will have a special, "It's YOUR birthday" episode on Sept. 17, which will allow young viewers to celebrate their own birthdays. □

Giannis the Great: Bucks star making his mark in NBA Finals

By BRIAN MAHONEY

AP Basketball Writer

MILWAUKEE (AP) — Giannis Antetokounmpo shook his head, unwilling to place himself in the class of the only player with a longer streak of 40-point games in an NBA Finals.

"I'm not Michael Jordan," Antetokounmpo said.

No, but he's exactly the player the Milwaukee Bucks need if they are going to win their first title in 50 years. They can tie the series against the Phoenix Suns in Game 4 on Wednesday.

With 42 and 41 points in his last two games, Antetokounmpo has joined LeBron James, Shaquille O'Neal, Jerry West and Rick Barry as players to have two straight 40-point outings in the NBA Finals.

That's halfway to Jordan, who did it four consecutive times in 1993 against Phoenix. "I'm not Michael Jordan," Antetokounmpo repeated. "But you know, all I care about right now, it's getting one more, that's all. Just take care of business, doing our job." When Antetokounmpo returned from a knee injury with 20 points and 17 rebounds in Game 1 of the series, he delivered good numbers.

But the 6-foot-11, 250-pound Antetokounmpo will always collect stats. With his long arms and longer strides, he can easily get himself near



Milwaukee Bucks forward Giannis Antetokounmpo reacts to a basket against the Phoenix Suns during the first half of Game 3 of basketball's NBA Finals in Milwaukee, Sunday, July 11, 2021.

Associated Press

enough to the basket to snatch a rebound or drop in a bucket. Good numbers don't mean it was a great game. Perhaps still uncertain of the knee or just re-adjusting to teammates who had played well without him, Antetokounmpo didn't seize the moment the way the Bucks need. He took only 11 shots fewer than three teammates.

The last two games were the Greek Freak these NBA Finals demand.

He had 42 points and 12 rebounds in Game 2, then 41 points, 13 rebounds and six assists as the Bucks finally

got on the board in Game 3 with a 120-100 victory.

The two-time MVP needs to stay in it.

Attacking the paint as he did in Game 3 presents problems for which the Suns may not have the answers. He helped send Deandre Ayton to the bench in foul trouble after the center had Phoenix leading into early in the second quarter. And he created open shooting space for Jrue Holiday and Khris Middleton to get some clean looks after both struggled in Game 2.

Antetokounmpo largely

kept that game from turning into a blowout by himself. With his teammates supporting him better in Milwaukee, it was the Bucks who won big.

"When guys make shots, it just makes it tough on the opposing team because now he's really just playing 1-on-1, and good luck with that," teammate Bobby Portis said.

The Suns don't have a lot of size outside of Ayton, but sometimes Antetokounmpo helps his opponents by settling for jumpers that remain a weaker part of his portfolio.

From his very first basket of Game 3, when he jumped over a defender to grab a rebound that he put back while being fouled, he made it clear he was going to keep going to the rim. When the Suns stopped him by fouling, he made them pay by making 13 of 17. "He's physical. When he gets downhill, gets to the basket, gets to the free throw line, it encourages him to keep going. And he was hitting his free throws ... and that just kind of opens up his whole game," Suns reserve Cam Johnson said. "So it's on us to stop him, give him more resistance." Nobody knew what Antetokounmpo could still do when he went down in Game 4 of the Eastern Conference finals against Atlanta with a hyperextended left knee. Even if he could come back and it wasn't clear he would until shortly before tipoff of the finals opener it was hard to imagine he could deliver the type of historic performances he has.

"I don't even now how he's even doing it, man," Portis said. "Most of the time when guys do that, they come back and ease into it, or they come back and they're kind of timid and whatnot. He's still just going out there and playing the same way like he never did that." □

Manny Pacquiao announces Aug. 21 fight with Errol Spence Jr

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Errol Spence Jr. formally Manny Pacquiao and announced Sunday that



Manny Pacquiao, left, and Errol Spence Jr., pose for a photo at a news conference at the Fox Studios lot in Los Angeles ahead of their upcoming boxing match, taking place in Las Vegas on Aug. 21, in Los Angeles Sunday, July 11, 2021.

Associated Press

they will fight Aug. 21 in a bout pitting an eight-division world champion against one of the sport's most dominant current champions.

Pacquiao (62-7-2, 39 KOs) and Spence (27-0, 21 KOs) will fight for Spence's WBC and IBF welterweight titles when they meet at T-Mobile Arena in Las Vegas.

The 42-year-old Pacquiao is a senator in his native Philippines. He hasn't fought since July 2019, when he beat Keith Thurman by split decision for his third consecutive victory. At a news conference in Los Angeles, Pacquiao admitted he is taking a

significant risk in returning against one of the top active fighters in boxing. Pacquiao said he could have picked "a much easier fight compared to Errol Spence" for his comeback bout, but chose to take on the unbeaten 147-pound champion "because I want to give a good fight to the fans. I want a real fight."

The 31-year-old Spence will be in the ring for only the second time since October 2019, when he survived a single-car crash in which he was ejected from his Ferrari 488 Spider. Spence was convicted of driving while intoxicated,

but received no jail time. He returned last December in his native Dallas area with a unanimous decision over Danny Garcia. Pacquiao has been stopped just once since 1999, but Spence said he won't enter the ring looking for a highlight-reel knockout. Spence is 3 1/2 inches taller than Pacquiao, and his frame was significantly larger during their ceremonial faceoff. "I definitely have the ability to finish him," Spence said. "But for me, it's about winning the fight." The pay-per-view event will be telecast by Fox Sports. □

Ohtani is AL starting pitcher, bats leadoff in All-Star Game

By **RONALD BLUM**
AP Baseball Writer

DENVER (AP) — Shohei Ohtani will be the American League's starting pitcher in Tuesday's night's All-Star Game and will bat lead-off, too, as the designated hitter in another landmark for the two-way Japanese sensation.

A 27-year-old in his fourth major league season with the Los Angeles Angels, Ohtani is the first two-way starter in the history of the All-Star Game, which began in 1933.

"I was actually not expecting to be chosen as a pitcher at all," Ohtani said Monday through a translator. "It's a huge honor and I'm going to try my best."

Ohtani has generated huge buzz across baseball for his exploits at the plate and on the mound. He leads the majors with 33 home runs and is 4-1 with a 3.49 ERA in 13 starts.

"This is what the fans want to see. It's personally what I wanted to see," said AL manager Kevin Cash of Tampa Bay.

Max Scherzer of the Washington Nationals will be the starting pitcher for the National League in the game at Coors Field.

Ohtani was elected to start at DH by fans and was voted to the AL pitching staff by fellow players. He's hitting .279 with 70 RBIs, trailing only Toronto's Vladimir



Los Angeles Angels designated hitter Shohei Ohtani (17), left, drops hit bat after hitting a home run during the third inning of a baseball game against the Baltimore Orioles Friday, July 2, 2021, in Anaheim; and Washington Nationals starting pitcher Max Scherzer, right, throws a pitch to the Los Angeles Dodgers during the first inning of a baseball game, Friday, July 2, 2021, in Washington.

Associated Press

Guerrero Jr. (73) and Boston's Rafael Devers (72).

On the mound, Ohtani has struck out 87 and walked 35 in 67 innings. His fastball averages 93.8 mph, essentially the same as the 93.7 mph exit velocity of balls off his bat, tops among qualified major league batters. Ohtani is the most accomplished two-way player since Babe Ruth, who last pitched regularly in 1919. Fans were to see him in action starting Monday night in the Home Run Derby.

Ohtani will become the second Japanese pitcher

to start an All-Star game after Hideo Nomo in 1995 and the third Asian. Hyun Jin Ryu of South Korea started in 2019. A rules change this year for the All-Star Game will allow Ohtani, listed as a DH, to be treated as two individual players and remain as a hitter when he is removed as a pitcher.

Guerrero will bat second and play first base for the AL, followed by Boston shortstop Xander Bogaerts, New York Yankees right fielder Aaron Judge, Devers at third, Toronto second baseman Marcus

Semien, Kansas City catcher Salvador Pérez, Blue Jays left fielder Teoscar Hernández and Baltimore center fielder Cedric Mullins.

NL manager Dave Roberts of the Los Angeles Dodgers has San Diego shortstop Fernando Tatis Jr. leading off, followed by the Dodgers' Max Muncy at designated hitter, St. Louis third baseman Nolan Arenado, Atlanta first baseman Freddie Freeman, Cincinnati right fielder Nick Castellanos, Reds left fielder Jesse Winker, Philadelphia catcher J.T. Realmuto and Pitts-

burgh second baseman Adam Frazier.

Scherzer will make his fourth All-Star start, matching Jim Palmer and Randy Johnson for second-most behind five each by Robin Roberts, Lefty Gomez and Don Drysdale. Scherzer started the 2013 All-Star Game for the AL while with Detroit, and the 2017 and 2018 All-Star Games while with Washington. An eight-time All-Star and three-time Cy Young Award winner, he is 7-4 with a 2.66 ERA this season with 134 strikeouts and 22 walks in 98 innings.

The All-Star Game returns this year after the cancellation of the 2020 event at Dodger Stadium in Los Angeles due to the coronavirus pandemic, which delayed opening day until July 23.

This year's game was scheduled for Atlanta's Truist Park, but baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred announced April 2 that the event would be moved because of Georgia's new election law, which critics say will negatively affect communities of color.

Four days later, Manfred said this year's game would be played at Coors Field, which held its only previous All-Star Game in 1998.

Because of last year's cancellation, Dodger Stadium will host the All-Stars in 2022. □

Novak Djokovic '50-50' on whether to play at Tokyo Olympics

By **MATTIAS KARÉN**
Associated Press

WIMBLEDON, England (AP) — Even with a chance to complete a so-called "Golden Slam," Novak Djokovic isn't sure he'll be playing at the Tokyo Olympics. The lack of fans and the tight coronavirus restrictions in Tokyo means Djokovic remains on the fence about traveling to Japan.

"I'll have to think about it," Djokovic said after winning Wimbledon on Sunday. "My plan was always to go to Olympic Games. But right now I'm a little bit divided. It's kind of 50-50

because of what I heard in the last couple days."

That includes the news that there won't be fans in the stands. And that the tight restrictions will mean he can only bring a limited number of people as part of his personal team.

"That was really disappointing to hear," Djokovic said.

Rafael Nadal has already said he will not be playing in Tokyo, while Roger Federer has not yet made a decision.

The top-ranked Djokovic beat Matteo Berrettini in four sets to earn his third straight Grand Slam title

after the Australian Open and French Open and record-equaling 20th in total. If he wins in Tokyo and at the U.S. Open, he'd be the first male tennis player to complete a "Golden Slam" all four Grand Slam tournaments and the Olympics in the same calendar year. Steffi Graf is the only woman to have done it, in 1988. Rod Laver was the last man to win all four Grand Slams in the same calendar year, in 1969.

Goran Ivanisevic, who is on Djokovic's coaching team, would like to see the Serb add his name to the list. □



Novak Djokovic attends a press conference after winning the men's final against Italy's Matteo Berrettini at the Wimbledon Tennis Championships in London, Sunday, July 11, 2021.

Associated Press